

## **PARK COMMITTEE**

Thursday, June 12, 2014

4 - 5:30 p.m.

Room 319 City Hall

### ***Meeting Minutes***

**Committee members present:** Co-Chairs David Wilson. Members: Dan Collison, David Fields, Jacob Frey, Brent Hanson, Penny Hunt, Barbara Johnson, Michele Kelm-Helgen, Eric Laska, Aron Lipkin, Peggy Lucas, David Miller, Tom Nordyke, Jim Norkosky, Brian Pietsch, Mike Ryan, Matt Tucker

**Committee members excused:** Co-Chair Tom Fisher. Members: Hussein Ahmed, Lester Bagley, Bruce Chamberlain, Peter McLaughlin, R.T. Rybak, Trent Tucker

**Guests:** Tim Nelson, Carletta Sweet, David Miller, Ben Johnson, Lynn Regnier, Harvey Ettinger, Dannon Hulskotter, Claudia Kittock, Steve Cramer, Arlene Fried, Jenn Hathaway, Eric Roper, Liz Wielinski

**Staff/consultants present:** Kjersti Monson, Ann Calvert, Beth Elliott, Heidi Hamilton, Brian Schaffer, Marsha Wagner

1. **Welcome.** Chair David Wilson called the meeting to order at 4:05. Before proceeding with agenda items, he noted the exciting news that the Super Bowl will be coming to Minneapolis in 2018, and the impact that might have on the park.

#### **2. Committee Business**

- a. **Approval of Minutes of 5/08/14 Meeting** – It was MOVED and SECONDED that the minutes be approved. Motion CARRIED.

Before continuing with the agenda, Chair Wilson reminded the Park Committee members that although there have been a number of the articles in the papers recently, what they are tasked to do is very important, complex and challenging. There are very exciting things going on downtown, in the area around the new Vikings stadium, and around the park itself. The Park Committee's job is to establish the guidelines and principles for how the park is to be developed, with a lot of moving parts related to funding, governance, and operation of the park that fall outside of the responsibilities of this Committee but do impact its work.

#### **3. Principles Update.**

- a. **Timeline for defining principles.** Kjersti Monson introduced a document, Working Draft of Timelines and Activities [Appendix A]. She said that time is short to deliver this park, so the timeline is aggressive. For the July meeting staff will prepare draft principles for the Park Committee's review, revision and discussion. A significant amount of the meeting time will be spent on this. In August staff will come back with a revised, final set of principles that the Committee could adopt. The Design Consultant will be guided by these principles.
- b. **Super Bowl and Post-Super Bowl.** The Minnesota Vikings, Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority (MSFA) and the City of Minneapolis were successful in their bid for the 2018 Super Bowl. Chair Wilson invited Michelle Kelm-Helgen to talk about the expected uses of the park during the Super Bowl period, and how they impact what the Park Committee ultimately decides to build.

Ms. Kelm-Helgen said the NFL requires a 400,000 square foot structure within the security perimeter that is climate-controlled and indoors. They try to get about half of the expected 75,000 participants through security starting early in the afternoon to avoid a delay closer to game time. The urban setting poses a challenge in meeting this requirement, as opposed to suburban stadiums that are surrounded by large parking lots. The only way it will be feasible is to make use of the park, which will be covered by three separate but connected tents, in combination with the Armory and surrounding streets. This combined space is still well below the number of square feet actually required.

Subsequent discussion dealt with such issues as permanent structures or features, trees, plantings, and turf. Structures would be feasible if they could be removed and stored for large events, with MSFA bearing the cost. Permanent structures like a restaurant or retail would have to be worked around. Trees and plantings would be okay on the perimeter, possibly within the tented area if not too large. In the original park concept, artificial turf was mentioned as being more feasible than replacing sod. Any major event (i.e. NCAA's Final Four) would have a similar gathering space requirement.

Chair Wilson reminded the Park Committee members that their responsibility for setting principles should include uses for which the park is already committed, i.e. the Super Bowl. He said that designing a park that is useful to nearby residents, citizens of the city, and workers at Wells Fargo while also accommodating these mega-events could be looked at as a tremendous challenge or a creative opportunity for designers.

#### **4. Park Design Process Update**

- a. Dual Track Design Process.** Ms. Monson defined several key terms used by the working group:  
*Basic Park:* The basic park Ryan is contractually obligated to deliver by June 2016  
*Opening Day Park:* Slightly enhanced version of the basic park, delivered on the same timeline or an agreed alternative timeline, by a consultant engaged through an RFP process  
*Ultimate Park:* The full park vision that will require fundraising and a longer timeline to design and construct, to be delivered post-Super Bowl

There is agreement among the City, Park Board and Ryan that we want to get beyond the Basic Park and deliver the Opening Day Park (ODP), which would be the first phase of the dual-track design process. The Park Board, as the contracting agent, would engage a design consultant through an RFP process to develop a concept design for the ODP as well as the Ultimate Park (UP). Liz Wielinski, President of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, added that this was a very practical approach.

Matt Tucker expressed concerns about the "dual track" process for the park, explaining that if the primary portion of the park is not substantially complete in August 2016, inertia will be lost and costs for physical improvements will go up. He proposed an alternative approach, whereby the very tight timeline for completion of a substantial portion of the park by August 2016 would be a motivator and call for action. The schedule is tight but is doable if everyone wants to get on board and have a park that is built for more than tailgating, with a soft opening in September 2016 and a big opening in the spring of 2017. A number of Park Committee members concurred.

In the discussion that followed, Park Committee members raised a number of issues, including the importance of public perception of the park, showing people what the fully-developed park will look like even if it can't be completely constructed in 2016; who would be responsible for

raising funds, which could take 18-24 months; programming of the park and adaptability for multiple uses; constraints because of the short timeline; and the importance of the RFP including the complexities and challenges due to these constraints.

Ms. Kelm-Helgen explained that the City is able to create this park without tax increment financing or general funds because revenue from two parking ramps – Downtown East and McClellan – is paying off the bonds being used to purchase the land for the park. MSFA is not taking over a city park, but the park is funded by stadium revenues for thirty years. Wells Fargo and Ryan are also key players. Chair Wilson stated that the discourse about the park and overall project has not had enough details and facts regarding how it is being funded, and suggested that the City, Park Board and MSFA create a fact sheet showing how much the park will cost taxpayers, etc.

To conclude this discussion, Chair Wilson proposed a motion that the Park Committee ask the City and the Park Board to re-evaluate the dual design process, and instead of deciding on the scope of Phase One and Phase Two now, that the park design be completed to an appropriate level of detail (including all envisioned amenities, funding needs and construction time required) in order to make a better-informed decision on whether the park build-out needs to be phased, and if so, how. It was MOVED and SECONDED that this motion be approved. Motion CARRIED.

- b. RFP and Consultant Selection Timeline.** An RFP will be issued by the Park Board in July 2014 for construction of an Opening Day and Ultimate Park. Consultant selection will take place in September 2014.
- c. Role of Design Consultant.** The role of the design consultant will be influenced by the discussion taking place in the Park Committee meetings, and will be responsible for Opening Day and Ultimate Park concept designs.
- d. Role of Ryan.** Ryan, which is contractually obligated for building out a basic park, will be a participant in the process, providing professional and construction services including clearing of the site. As the process moves to creation of an Opening Day Park, Ryan will step back from the design process but will participate as needed.
- e. Role of Park Committee.** The role of the Park Committee is unchanged. It is still guided by the ordinance that was adopted by the City Council to define the vision, principles and programming. The Park Board, in its leadership role, may decide to adopt the recommendations of the Park Committee. It is, however, required to provide citizen engagement, which may consist of an opportunity for public input following Park Committee meetings.

There was some discussion about who would do fundraising for the park, and how much money would be needed to create the Ultimate Park. These have not yet been determined, but the topic segued into the next agenda item which dealt with potential operations funds for the Park.

- 5. Update on Operations.** Steve Cramer, President and CEO of the Minneapolis Downtown Council, reported that the Downtown Council and Downtown Improvement District (DID) in its 2025 Plan made a commitment to create and sustain a green infrastructure in downtown Minneapolis. It commissioned a feasibility study in fall 2011 to examine creation of a Greening Nonprofit Organization (GNPO) which came back with five recommendations:
  - Establish a downtown public realm collaborative to create a comprehensive plan
  - Establish additional capabilities within DID, primarily fundraising and programming
  - Build knowledge and support for public realm vision

- Build recognition of Downtown 2025 Plan to expand a definition of downtown Minneapolis that includes downtown neighborhoods
- The City, Park Board, and County adopt the public realm plan as a guiding document

In July 2012 the DID Board gave approval to move forward, but nothing has happened. With recent changes, including alignment of the Downtown Council and DID, the time is right to move forward with the GNPO initiative. At the last Downtown Council/DID Executive Committee meeting, the Committee authorized an additional \$50,000 expenditure to develop an implementation plan. One component could be a conservancy that would be the steward of all downtown parks, if contracted or invited to do so. This would be more efficient than having multiple entities approach people and organizations for fundraising.

**6. Closing Business.**

- Next Meeting.** Scheduled for Thursday, July 10, Room 319 City Hall; next steps will be to complete principles and guidelines.
- Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.